



THE CHILD PLAN

July 2004

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Our Mission

North Carolina will provide children and families with mental health needs a system of quality care that includes accessible, culturally appropriate, individualized mental health treatment, intervention and prevention services, delivered in the home and community, in the least restrictive and most consistent manner possible.



**If you need assistance,
or have comments
or questions about the
plan
or its implementation:**

Email us:
ChildPlan@ncmail.net

Call us:
(919) 715-2656

Mail to us:
Susan E. Robinson

ADAM SAYS: "NEVER GIVE UP"

Adam Oates, a 14-year-old from Cleveland County, received the 2004 National Mental Health Association "mpower youth" award for speaking out to help eliminate stigma about mental health disorders.

Adam was 11 years old when he realized he had a mental illness. He said, "I began going down hill when my dad died of cancer in February 2002. I was in the 6th grade. I was so angry with everyone and everything. I was failing; I had no friends; teachers did not understand me; and I felt lost." The following October, Adam's mother decided to put him in the hospital because he felt like hurting himself or others.

He said that decision started him on the road to understanding how to help himself. Next, Adam attended day treatment. "There I felt better about myself; the class size was much smaller. I was able to get therapy when I needed it. I learned a lot of team building skills, anger management and that it was okay to have a mental illness."

Adam joined a statewide group for youth with mental health concerns – Powerful Youth Friends United. "Finally, I felt accepted! I began to learn skills on how to assist, support and advocate for other youth." Adam is now successfully back in middle school. He became co-facilitator of a

group in his community for youth with mental illness and is involved at the state MH/DD/SAS system. He lead a youth rally called, "Stomping Out the Stigma." He has spoken with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, local county commissioners and representatives about reducing stigma against youth with mental health concerns. He says, "There are no 'bad kids' in this world. Everyone has some kind of challenge that they have to face."

Adam's message to all the youth out there with mental health concerns: "NEVER GIVE UP, no matter how hard it gets.

FAMILIES REPRESENTED ON STATE CFAC

Youth and families have two strong representatives on the Division's new State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (S-CFAC).

Ben Jones of Guilford Co. is a teenager who has mental health and substance abuse concerns. Both his brother and sister have mental health challenges. Without knowing he was an advocate, Ben has always helped kids by sending them to get help when they needed it. Ben is a member of the statewide youth group – Powerful Youth Friends United. He has spoken to a class at

UNC-G for three years about living with siblings who have mental health challenges and about his own challenges. He has presented at a national conference in Oregon entitled "Building on Family Strengths." Ben's mother, Libby, is a member of the Guilford Co. CFAC.

Kathleen Herr of Orange Co. is another strong representative on the S-CFAC. She and her husband are parents of two daughters with multiple disabilities. Early on, they became advocates at their daughters' schools and have supported the

younger one in Special Olympics. When the older daughter started experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, they found themselves in clinical and hospital settings with poor communication, policies and procedures. They became concerned about consumers and families who were unable to effectively advocate for themselves. Kathleen states, "I want to help guide choices and options using evidence based practices in mental health."

For more information about local and state CFACs, see:
<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/>

PROGRESS AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- **Access:** Under study based on service definitions. (See "Did you know?" sidebar.)
- **Accountability:** See article below on NC-TOPPS.
- **Best practices:** Under study based on service definitions. (See sidebar.)
- **Communication:** The email address is working. The team is developing a brochure for broad distribution and redesigning the web site.
- **Memoranda of agreement:** The MOA regarding the Comprehensive Treatment Services Program (CTSP) between DMH/DD/SAS, Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP), the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) continues to be in effect.
- **Operations/Rules/Policies:** See sidebar.
- **Partnerships:** See article below on Interagency Developments.
- **Training:** The training plan is under review.
- **Transitioning children to home communities:** The team is developing a comprehensive assessment process to determine a child's needs/status for use by state facilities, communities and other agencies. Design of the process and instrument is being coordinated with staff from DJJDP, DPI and DSS child protective services.
- The Division's State Plan 2004 is on the web: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/

FACTS & FIGURES

System of Care Outcomes

After one year of services, outcomes for children/youth involved in federal System of Care (SOC) demonstration projects show:

- School attendance improved from 68 to 76 percent.
- Suspensions from school among African-American males decreased from 72 to 44 percent.
- Children/youth with average or better school grades increased from 56 to 66 percent.

NC-TOPPS – OUTCOMES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Performance and outcome measurement are major elements of reform. The DMH/DD/SAS Quality Management Team is expanding the North Carolina Treatment Outcomes and Program Performance System (NC-TOPPS), currently used for substance abuse only, to include mental health services for children and adults. NC-TOPPS

will provide outcomes data to show how the lives of children and families improve.

The expanded system will include measures of outcomes in education, residence, substance use, aggressive behavior, involvement in the justice system, social support, symptom reduction, service needs, etc.

By June 30, 2005, staff of LMEs and providers of mental health services will be trained to use this web-based system.

For further information please contact:

Shealy.Thompson@ncmail.net,
Quality Management Team,
DMH/DD/SAS.

Did you know?

North Carolina's Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) is now reviewing our MH/DD/SAS service definitions. Before sending them to DMA, staff of DMH/DD/SAS reviewed public comments to make revisions. Next, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) must approve the service definitions. Approval is anticipated by the end of the year.

Residential services are included in the package of service definitions. Service rates will be published when service definitions are finally approved.

We expect implementation to occur July 2005. This will allow time to establish needed services in local communities.

Remember, no child will be discharged from a state facility until needed services are available in his/her community.

INTERAGENCY DEVELOPMENTS

Conversations with DSS

Staff from DMH/DD/SAS and the Division of Social Services are working together to align policies regarding child and family teams. Both agencies use a child/family team to develop and monitor a person-centered plan for a child. The intent of this project is to develop common operations, so team meetings and plans meet the needs of both when a child and family are involved with both

agencies.

National Policy Academy

The State of North Carolina is one of eight states awarded a grant to participate in the National Policy Academy. The intent is to improve services for youth with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders involved with the juvenile justice system. A joint team from DMH/DD/SAS and the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) will develop a strategic

plan with national technical assistance. *Members from DJJDP:*

- Don Hargrove
- Dr. O. Martin Pharr
- Michael Haley

Members from DMH/DD/SAS:

- Antonio Coor
- Susan Robinson

Other members:

- Judge H. Paul McCoy, Jr. -Chief District Judge, District 6A
- Pat Solomon- Parent and Family Advocate
- Michael Rieder - Haven House